

What It Means That We Are Spiritual Beings

We've got a new expression; I love it. It's transformation—not information—that we want. We're not just here to give you some ideas. We really want people to catch on and to start a new agenda for their life, if it isn't there already. It's there already, but to really more intentionally and consciously begin seeing the world in a different way, and seeing yourself in a new way, and seeing people in a fresh way.

I want to share some thoughts about that this afternoon—people are spiritual. Duh. That's what you're thinking, right? What's new about that? But I think it is an idea and a reality that we need to truly impress upon ourselves because it changes how we live and act in this world. When we realize that every gesture and action toward others affects them spiritually.

Even a pat on the back, a literal pat on the back, which is a physical thing, is a spiritual action. It affects people spiritually. So we need to change or modify our idea about what spirituality is. It isn't just something between people and God. It is people with people, people when they're alone. People are spiritual beings and they are helped and hindered by the people around. And so that's what we need to really continue to realize—that we are intricate combinations of the physical and the spiritual and we are in the spirit-raising business. I think that's what Jesus wants us to really magnify and realize and activate in our lives—that we are in the spirit-raising business, and that means we are on the healing team.

We're on the healing team, healing of broken bones and broken backs. Other kinds of ailments are not just dependent on the medical world, they're not just dependent on the medical world and God, God is healing people through us. We are essential parts of God's healing team in this world.

And so, as you see people from now on, if you haven't already, realize that they are affected by you, and that the most powerful medicine we have to give is love in all its forms. “The greatest of these is love,” Paul said. All these other things, but the greatest of these is love. All those other wonderful dimensions of spiritual living that are interesting and necessary, but all of them diminish compared to love. Everybody needs love. And so that's really what these three days, what the book, **The Miracle of Kindness**, is about, and this whole campaign is about—is trying to activate God's people, give them an incentive and an awareness and a realization and a motivation to see every person at the post office, at the hospital, that you're driving next to in the car. These are all spiritual beings who are affected by us for the better or for the worse. We tend to think that spirituality. You know, you want to grow spiritually; it means pray more—and it does—and get closer to God, and that's part of it, but that's just a fraction. Spiritual spirituality, our spiritual health is so dependent on people, people, we are relational beings and I'm sure that's why God created us, male and female. That's why Jesus said, ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am present.’ What he's saying is the spirit of God is alive when people come together. That's where we nourish and support and encourage and help and heal each other. Just having friends is a healing thing. Just having someone with you, just one person with you makes you stronger and better than when you're alone, because wherever there is kindness or love, God is present. You know these verses from 1st John, they're so awesome to me. ‘Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God. Everyone who loves, knows God.’ Imagine that if you love, you know God. Even if you didn't know it.

He goes on to say, ‘God is love, dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.’ That is so powerfully important. God's love is completed through, and in, and by us. We are so essential. We are so essential, part of the ingredients of God's love in this world. And so that's our mission and that's the prairie fire we want to fan and continue to burn in this world, where God's people, followers of Jesus, realize, “*Ah, that's what it's about. Ah, now I have something to do the rest of my life, every day of my life. I am needed.*”

Every time I leave the house, I'm on a mission, and there are people whose spirits I can lift; there are places to go where I am needed and useful, because everywhere you can, you go." You can be a cheering person, a support person. If you haven't smiled since 1966, and you start smiling, you are. You are brightening the world. That's how easy it is.

I'm so impressed with these two little parables. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, How small it can be, and how big it can grow, and that's the way it is with Care and Kindness. You don't have to be a genius, you don't have to be educated, you don't have to be fantastic, you don't have to have a great personality. Just a little bit can grow into so much.

The other one is like the yeast. You just put a little care and kindness into the mix, and it grows and spreads in its effects and makes it all better. This is not a big, monumental, overwhelming assignment. It's something God needs and everybody can do it, and it depends on realizing that people aren't just physical. Care and Kindness doesn't affect a motorcycle or a washing machine. I guess you've got to treat them well, I guess, but they don't respond to encouragement, but people do, and everybody is part of this process.

A while back, I read a remarkable story. The man involved . . . this is a couple of centuries ago . . . not that I read it—that it happened. He was a Spanish explorer in the 16th century. His name was Nunez, Cabeza de Vaca, the way I read it. He was the only survivor of a shipwreck in the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Coast tribe of indigenous Mexicans, rescued him and brought him into their village. They were a sad group of people, sickly, victims of drought and famine. Many of them looked like they were coming to the end of their lives. Nunez, of course, had nothing to give them. He had been shipwrecked, and he had nothing when he was found. He didn't even have an education about helping sick people. All he had was himself and prayer. But he began to relate to these people, and befriend them, and encourage them, and pray for them, and embrace them with his kindness. And he said, to my amazement, the Mexicans started getting well, and pretty soon they began to tell him how well they were. And he said, *"I realized I was far more than I ever thought I was."* And that's you and me. We are far more than we ever think of ourselves as being, because every one of us is like this man Nunez. What we bring to others in care and attention and listening and kindness, in phone calls and notes, is the love of God, which is essential to life.

It's essential to life. And compassion—feeling with (that's what compassion means; to feel with)—compassion is the essence of God's spirit. There isn't any word that is found in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that describes God more than in almost more than any other. It's compassion, feeling with his people, God's people, and as we are created in the image of God, that is the essence of us as well. We are compassionate people.

We are created compassionately, with compassion, and to be what God wants us to be, we must express that compassion. We must care about the world. And care means more than a feeling. It means doing something. Activating the feelings themselves don't count for much, but we are spiritual healers when we go to people, in some way, we touch their lives.

So this week, I hope it will be a transforming week, informing and transforming, maybe reforming, transformation. This is not just to give you some good ideas. Every speaker is oriented to helping you to know how to care, know how to approach and go into places that you're shy of, or you're not sure of, not certain how to do it, help you to go into those easy places. I've told many people about my campaign at the US post office. There's one woman who's been waiting on me for five years and she was really scary. I was scared of her. I was; and I told Linda, *"I'm going to make her my project."* I made her my project. So, to this day, I go in there and I admire her and I compliment her. She's one of my best friends today. She is a person who has been transformed by just simple acts of Care and Kindness. And it's so much fun

to have that kind of an agenda in life. I'm the coach, the Koach of Kindness. Now I've got to say that as a, as a little a defense, the coach always isn't always the best player. I'm not that great at it, but I am the coach, and I am working at it, and every one of us can have little projects like that, or a dozen of them. And you can make such a difference in people's lives. Some of them you do it, you won't know that you make that difference, but you can believe it. We must believe it, that we're making a difference in people's lives when we touch them on the bus or in passing at the store, you'll never see them again.

As well as going into those hard places. Go into those hard places. We'll talk more about that. Where nobody wants to go; where I don't want to go. Those places where there's just strong and heavy grief and heartache, and you know, you're helpless. You know you can't change it. You don't want to go there. And yet your presence there, that law . . . **90% is showing up**, your presence there . . . is transforming—guaranteed—and that's what God wants us to do, to die for others. And that's what we do when we go into those hard places, or even when we just change our mind and start smiling for the first time in 30 years. It's a form of dying, leaving our comfort zone for someone else.

So may this week, may the spirit of Jesus expand you and bless you and may you be captivated by this, this really exciting, agenda that you can, that each one of us can carry. And the wonderful thing about it is, when Jesus said, you must take up your cross and follow me and die for others. It is also the key to happiness. This is the way people find happiness in life. When you are working for something that is undeniably good, it helps others and you're daring to do it, they will be happier, but you will be too, that is one's wonderful payoff for all of this. You have a key to happiness.

I think in the book there's a little example of Karl Menninger, one of the legendary great psychiatrists in our history here. And somebody said, *“Well, what would you do if you knew somebody. . . if you met somebody, and they said they're really just pretty depressed and discouraged and aimless and feeling hopeless . . . what kind of help would you recommend for them?”* The guy expected him to just say, ‘I'd send them to one of my psychiatrist brothers or something.’ Karl Menninger said, *“I would tell him to go across the tracks, find somebody who is discouraged and sit with them and try to encourage them.”* He says that's the key to finding encouragement for yourself.

And that's what this is all about. Not the selfish part, but that is the payoff. Others need you. There is such a wonderful payoff for it, so may God really be with you this week, as we are blessed by wonderful workshops and speakers and each other. That's the, that's the bonus too. We get to know each other, care about each other, and we know that we all, we all share the same common outlook and desire in life.